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An evaluation of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "An evaluation of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women" (JIU/REP/99/2), which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DDSMS	Department for Development Support and Management Services
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe (of the United Nations)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
ILO	International Labour Office
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (of the United Nations)
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services (of the United Nations)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SNA	System of National Accounts
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNF	United Nations Foundation, Inc.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
UNU	United Nations University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WID	Women in Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was established in response to a recommendation made by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City in mid-1975. Following a series of resolutions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly, INSTRAW became operational in 1979, but it was not until 1983 that the Headquarters of the Institute was inaugurated in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, and the Statute was finalized.

Article 1 of the Statute states that INSTRAW was "established in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to serve as a vehicle on the international level for the purpose of undertaking research and establishing training programmes to contribute to the integration and mobilization of women in development, to raise awareness of women's issues worldwide and better to assist women to meet new challenges and directions".

INSTRAW is an autonomous institution operating within the framework of the United Nations, and, as such, it is required to raise all of its funding from voluntary contributions. This financial structure has left the Institute exposed to the vagaries of the voluntary funding system under which the United Nations conducts so many of the programmes which it targets at the most disadvantaged and vulnerable of the world's population.

In spite of the obvious difficulties of reconciling short-term financing constraints with a medium- to long-term programme planning horizon, INSTRAW has managed to produce high quality outputs over a period of almost two decades, whilst at the same time adapting its programmes to reflect the evolving paradigm of Women in Development (WID) which has emerged from the three subsequent world conferences on women and gender. It is notable that the Beijing Platform for Action reaffirmed the separate mandate INSTRAW, while requests for more research and training were reflected in almost all its strategic objectives.

The Institute has achieved remarkable success, and it stands as an example to the whole United Nations system of what can be accomplished with the scantest of resources. It is thus regrettable that it now finds itself in an acute financial crisis which has been brought about primarily by the recent withdrawal of support by a few donors.

The Secretary-General's proposal in June 1993 to merge INSTRAW and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was conceived as part of his Reform Programme to streamline the United Nations and make it more efficient and cost effective. Whilst these overall objectives remain laudable, the outcome for INSTRAW, and hence for the Women in Development programmes, is verging on disastrous at this point in time. Observers trace the beginning of INSTRAW's present crisis to 1993 and the merger proposal. Since this merger is no longer being actively pursued, it behoves the United Nations to make good the damage caused to the Institute by the uncertainty of these recent years.

INSTRAW has become an undeserving casualty in the fight for funds which has characterized United Nations programming for many years, a fight which has intensified in the 1990s. Those institutions which have no access to funding through the regular budget of the United Nations suffer a disadvantage which has grown more serious in recent years, and it has become more and more difficult for them even to maintain the value of their resources in real terms. Member States must decide, therefore, if they are prepared to allow the demise of the only United Nations institution devoted entirely to research and training for the advancement of women in development, through the passive process of financial attrition.

The achievements of INSTRAW (paragraphs 16-32)

The achievements of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the field of Women in Development demonstrate that it is an extremely valuable institution in the United Nations system. It is a major vehicle by which the United Nations has been able to pursue its commitment to the equal rights of men and women, enshrined in the preamble to the Charter. It is, indeed, the only entity within the United Nations system devoted exclusively to research and training for the integration of women in development.

Recommendation 1

That the Institute should continue its work to fulfil its mandate is indisputable, but the survival of INSTRAW can only be assured by the commitment - and recommitment - of Member States. It is vital that Member States take the following steps.

(a) Reiterate their support for INSTRAW in resolutions in ECOSOC and the General Assembly, recognizing that the present crisis is of a short-term, financial nature, and further recognizing the high quality and very good "value for money" of the programme outputs of the Institute over the longer term.

(b) Resolve the immediate financial crisis by making resources available to enable the Institute to complete its operations for the 1998-1999 biennium.

(c) Strengthen financial support in the medium term, thus giving INSTRAW the opportunity to build on its achievements through the realization of its Strategic Plan and Work Programme for 2000-2003.

(d) Move swiftly to modify the Statute of INSTRAW, where necessary, to facilitate other recommendations of this report noted below.

The financial situation of INSTRAW (paragraphs 33-55)

As presently constituted, the Statute of INSTRAW requires that it raise all of its funds from voluntary contributions, which makes it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the level of donations from Member States. Total contributions received over the lifetime of the Institute suggest that it is significantly underfunded in relation to its mandate.

Fund-raising is the primary responsibility of the Director of the Institute who must accomplish this essential task along with a myriad of other responsibilities. It is probable that fund-raising has not received due attention, particularly in the follow-through of ideas and initiatives.

Recommendation 2

While Member States have a primary role to play in reaffirming, through their donations, their commitments to INSTRAW, several actions need to be taken to raise the visibility of the Institute, strengthen the fund-raising function, and raise the rate of return to fund-raising activities.

(a) It is essential that the Board of Trustees take a more active role in fund-raising through the regional networks of each individual Board member and the ex officio Board members. This network could be expanded by co-opting eminent persons onto regional fund-raising committees. A sub-committee of the Board should be established to coordinate this work.

(b) There should be a strengthening of regional offices of INSTRAW to aid visibility and facilitate fund-raising, as originally envisaged in the Statute, perhaps supported initially by contributions in kind, such as office space. The regional commissions of ECOSOC, as ex officio Board members, could assist the Institute in setting up regional offices, while existing proposals for establishing an INSTRAW office in Geneva should be explored further. In addition, INSTRAW should expand its existing network of national focal points, putting emphasis on national research and training institutions.

(c) A full-time fund-raising post should be added to INSTRAW's professional staffing structure, located in the Institute's Liaison Office in New York to facilitate contact with the Missions of Member States and ensure that the Institute has a high profile in the preparations for the annual pledging conference. This post could be at the First or Second Officer level (P-4/P-3).

(d) Fund-raising activities must be revitalized, along the lines presented below, in an effort to widen the donor base of the Institute:

- Approaches to Governments with a view to increasing funding through regular pledges;
- Approaches to bilateral technical cooperation agencies;
- Approaches to private foundations;
- Development of joint programmes on the basis of co-financing with United Nations system organizations and other multilateral organizations;
- Approaches to the business community;
- Approaches to private benefactors;
- Co-financing of projects with non-governmental organizations;
- Seeking contributions in kind.

This list is not original or exhaustive, but it does serve to underline the complexity of developing a comprehensive fund-raising strategy. Fund-raising activities should also be closely linked to INSTRAW's Strategic Plan and Work Programme, 2000-2003.

(e) The Institute should submit fresh proposals to the United Nations Foundation (UNF), which is responsible for approving projects for funding from the Turner gift, particularly as "Population and Women" is one of the three areas of concentration for UNF. The Institute should pay close attention to the project criteria of UNF in designing the project proposals.

(f) In respect of the immediate financial crisis, the Controller of the United Nations should monitor the Trust Fund of the Institute and adjust the current allotment in line with available resources so that the Institute might continue to operate at least through the end of the current biennium to ensure smooth programme delivery.

The staffing situation of INSTRAW (paragraphs 56-73)

In relation to its wide-ranging mandate, the Institute has been understaffed at the professional level since its inception, even taking into account its network mode of operations, its use of consultants for inputs into substantive activities, and the large complement of general service staff. The understaffing at the professional level has been further exacerbated by undergrading of posts, and the fact that service is limited to INSTRAW.

In recent biennia, the Institute has been handicapped by low post occupancy rates at the professional level. At the time of writing, the Director's post was vacant, and only two professional posts were occupied (one P-3 and one P-2).

Recommendation 3

(a) As a matter of urgency, an experienced WID professional should be appointed as Acting Director at the Institute's Headquarters in Santo Domingo, and the United Nations Secretariat, in full consultation with the Board of Trustees, should expedite the recruitment process to minimize the negative impact of the Director's post being vacant.

(b) The Executive Direction and Management branch of the Institute should be strengthened. It should include the Office of the Director, with overall responsibility for policy direction, coordination, liaison, fund-raising and advocacy, and a Deputy Director, with responsibility for day-to-day management of the Institute. The post of Director demands strong interpersonal and presentational skills to maximize the visibility of the Institute and help secure funding, and this should be a major criterion of the selection process.

(c) The original plan to have three separate substantive units should be implemented, with the Research Unit, the Training Unit and the Information, Communication and Documentation Unit each being headed by a Senior Officer, each supported by at least two other professional officers. Nine professional posts in the substantive units of INSTRAW, properly graded to reflect the nature of the work, would seem to be a minimum to facilitate a stimulating intellectual environment and to attract staff.

(d) The administration post at the Institute has been graded at various times as P-5, P-4 and P-3. Given the administrative support which INSTRAW receives from the United Nations Secretariat, there could be an Administration Officer at the Second Officer level (P-3) located at the Institute's Headquarters.

(e) As noted above, the Liaison Office in New York should be staffed by one professional post with primary responsibility for fund raising.

(f) To facilitate recruitment and improve staff mobility at the Institute, the restriction that service be limited to INSTRAW should be lifted.

(g) Given the long delays in the recruitment process, the United Nations Secretariat should initiate, as soon as possible, recruitment procedures for all the professional posts currently vacant, so that when funds become available appointments can be confirmed and further delays avoided.

Administrative arrangements with the United Nations Secretariat (paragraphs 74-81)

The arrangement by which the United Nations Secretariat provides administrative services to INSTRAW on a proportionate fee basis has not always worked smoothly, and there have been some incidents of mismanagement which have had negative repercussions on the reputation of the Institute.

Recommendation 4

(a) When professional post vacancies occur at the Institute, or can be foreseen, the Secretariat should expedite the international recruitment process so that posts may be filled in as short a time as possible, bearing in mind the large impact of vacancies on a small core staff.

(b) In line with the recommendation of the United Nations Board of External Auditors in April 1996, INSTRAW should be compensated for the "infructuous appropriation" of its funds

which arose when the Chief of Administration was "requisitioned and loaned elsewhere".

(c) The Secretariat should review its administrative procedures in respect of INSTRAW with the objectives of greater efficiency in the provision of services, and improved cooperation and transparency.

The autonomy of INSTRAW: a mixed blessing? (paragraphs 82-93)

The autonomy of INSTRAW was originally meant to relate to operational autonomy, which was designed to give the Institute leeway to implement a network mode of operations in pursuit of its mandate. The term is now more commonly used, however, in respect of financial autonomy with the implication that INSTRAW must seek only voluntary funds, being denied access to the regular budget of the United Nations.

It is noted that other United Nations organizations, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which are funded primarily from voluntary contributions, also have access to a subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations. This sets a precedent for all the voluntarily funded agencies.

Recommendation 5

Member States could consider an amendment to the Statute of INSTRAW to permit a subvention from the United Nations regular budget to finance the post of Director and other core posts, as is the case for UNIDIR.

INSTRAW in the context of United Nations programmes for the advancement of women (paragraphs 94-102)

INSTRAW continues to have a unique role to play in the sense that it is the only entity in the United Nations system devoted entirely to research, training and information in the context of the advancement of women in development, and by virtue of its strong comparative advantage in its specialized fields. The Beijing Platform for Action reinforced the position of INSTRAW when it reaffirmed its separate mandate.

Recommendation 6

(a) Member States should restate their commitment to the mandate of INSTRAW in resolutions to ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

(b) The division of labour between the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), INSTRAW and UNIFEM should be carefully monitored to avoid overlap and duplication. The coordination activities of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality should be refined, and activities which are directly relevant to INSTRAW's mandate should be included in the work programme of the Institute.

A vision for the future (paragraphs 103-109)

In response to a request of ECOSOC, INSTRAW has prepared a "Strategic Plan and Work Programme, 2000-2003" which outlines programme goals and actions for the medium term, as well as certain suggestions for institutional reform at the Institute.

Recommendation 7

(a) The following proposals put forward in the "Strategic Plan and Work Programme, 2000-2003" should be pursued:

- A more proactive role for the Board of Trustees, including involvement in policy formulation, research, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes, and fund-raising;

- Consideration of the possibility of establishing an Endowment Fund.

(b) The Institute should reinforce its existing cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, and seek closer relations with other research and training institutions of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), as well as academic and training institutes outside the United Nations system.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is in response, inter alia, to the request of the Economic and Social Council that the JIU "carry out an evaluation of the Institute which should include a detailed analysis of the reasons for the financial and staffing situation of the Institute and the implications thereof for the Institute at all levels..." (ECOSOC resolution 1998/48, paragraph 6, of 31 July 1998). In the same resolution, ECOSOC requested the Director of the Institute "to draw up a strategic and comprehensive work plan...setting out a vision for the future", and also requested that the JIU evaluate that strategic work plan.

2. The Economic and Social Council has expressed "deep concern over the serious financial situation of the Institute" (1998/48, 31 July 1998). The financial position of INSTRAW, which depends entirely on voluntary contributions for its resources, has been deteriorating since 1993 and, at the time of writing (April 1999), the Institute was experiencing a deep financial crisis which had forced it to separate many of its staff, and which was threatening its continued operational existence.

3. In common with many other observers, the Inspectors consider that it would be regrettable if the only United Nations institution devoted solely to research and training for the advancement of women were to cease to exist as a result of financial attrition. They hope that this report will stimulate wide debate, and that Member States will re-examine the issues and reaffirm their commitments in line with the Beijing Platform for Action.

4. Following the request of ECOSOC, this report was included in the 1999 Work Programme of the Joint Inspection Unit which was approved at the end of January 1999. It has been prepared under very pressing time constraints, following fact-finding missions to Santo Domingo and New York. The Inspectors would like to thank all those who participated in interviews, responded to questionnaires, and provided documentation or other information. They wish to extend special thanks to the staff of INSTRAW at its Headquarters in Santo Domingo without whose help this report could not have been completed in a timely manner.

II. A SHORT HISTORY OF INSTRAW

5. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was established by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1998 (LX) of 12 May 1976) in conformity with an earlier decision of the General Assembly (resolution 3520 (XXX) of 15 December 1975). The latter was based on a recommendation made by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City in the summer of 1975. A Group of Experts drawn from different parts of the world was convened by the Secretary-General in January 1976 to establish the foundations of the new body.

6. In December 1976, the General Assembly accepted the offer of the Government of Iran to act as host for the Institute (31/135), but in January 1979 this offer was withdrawn.[1] Having considered offers to provide host facilities made by other Member States, and recalling its resolution 1998 (LX) in which it decided, inter alia, that "the Institute should direct its activities with special attention to the needs of women in developing countries...", ECOSOC recommended, on 9 May 1979, that the Institute "should be located in the Dominican Republic, a developing country" (1979/11).

7. The General Assembly accepted the offer of the Government of the Dominican Republic to host the Institute in its resolution 34/157 of 17 December 1979. As an interim measure, the substantive and administrative preparations for the establishment of the Institute continued in New York, and, in 1983, the Headquarters of the Institute was moved to Santo Domingo, in accordance with Article IX of the Statute, which also made provision for the Institute to establish other offices elsewhere.

8. The Institute and its work are governed by a Board of Trustees composed of members nominated by States and appointed by ECOSOC, who serve in their individual capacity. A representative of the Secretary-General, the Director of the Institute, a representative of each of the regional commissions of ECOSOC, and a representative of the host country serve as ex officio members of the Board (Article III of the Statute).

9. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was "established in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to serve as a vehicle on the international level for the purpose of undertaking research and establishing training programmes to contribute to the integration and mobilization of women in development, to raise awareness of women's issues worldwide and better to assist women to meet new challenges and directions" (Article 1 of the Statute). Through research, training and the collection and exchange of information, INSTRAW was to stimulate and assist the efforts of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations aimed at the advancement of women in economic, social and political areas (A/33/316, paragraph 21). In an early report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly the three main areas of concern of the Institute were listed, in order of priority, as (i) information and documentation, (ii) research and (iii) training.[2]

10. The Institute's mode of operation is through networking at the international, regional and national levels, as a means of mobilizing support and stimulating actions from Governments, the United Nations and non-governmental sources. In practical terms this means that the Institute endeavours to interact with the other organizations of the United Nations system, and collaborate where possible on joint projects and programmes. It also maintains a network of communications with Governments, as well as with national and international women's organizations.[3]

11. In reviewing the history of the Institute, several stages in its evolution can be

distinguished. From its inception up to the mid-1980s, INSTRAW consolidated its position and became "firmly institutionalized within the UN system".[4] This was a nascent period for research and training programmes for Women in Development, whether in the United Nations system or in interregional, regional or national institutions, and it was necessary for the Institute to explore the programme options and modalities open to it, and to create a niche for itself. In these years, the Institute made some important strategic decisions which led to its collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office on improving statistics and indicators on the situation of women and, subsequently, with the Statistical Division of the International Labour Office (ILO) on women in the informal sector.

12. In the second half of the 1980s, the Institute concentrated on follow-up studies of its initial research findings and on developing its training activities, and it widened its areas of interest to include women, water supply and sanitation, and women and environmental issues. The focus of its activities also shifted more to the national and regional levels to facilitate the implementation of research findings related to the integration of women in the mainstream of development.

13. In the early 1990s, the work programme was focused on mainstreaming gender in development strategies and planning, and on increasing the visibility of women through the valuation of women's contributions to socio-economic development. From 1994, the economic and political empowerment of women became important areas of interest for INSTRAW, and for the 1996-1997 biennium, the Institute identified four thematic areas: economic empowerment of women; environment and sustainable development; media and communications; and statistics on gender issues.

14. INSTRAW's proud record of achievements in its specialized fields, and its demonstrated adaptability in response to the changing paradigm of Women in Development, should have given it optimism as it moved into the 1990s. Indeed, professional posts were fully filled in the 1988-1989 biennium, contributions to the Trust Fund were buoyant (more than $2.3 million in 1990), and the Institute had developed a medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 in response to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. But radical changes lay ahead. In June 1993, as part of his Reform Programme for the United Nations, the Secretary-General submitted a proposal to the Economic and Social Council for the merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM. A period of turbulence and uncertainty followed, marked by declining financial support from the Institute's donors, increasing problems in filling professional vacancies, and an undermining of staff morale. Eventually, the proposed merger was defeated at the political level, but not without a considerable negative impact on the Institute.

15. In September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reaffirmed the separate mandate of INSTRAW.[5] A period of renewal and revitalization appeared to be in prospect: a new Director was appointed to the Institute in October 1997 and a strategic plan was developed for the new millennium. However, for reasons which will be examined below, this revitalization effort has faltered, and INSTRAW is currently facing a major financial crisis.

III. THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INSTRAW

A. The outputs of INSTRAW

16. The recommendations and conclusions of the Group of Experts on the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women were presented by the Secretary-General in a report to ECOSOC in March 1976.[6] The Inspectors restate some of these in the following paragraphs, in part because they believe that some misunderstandings and, indeed, ignorance persist in respect of the original objectives, and the modus operandi, of the Institute.

17. "The research programme of the Institute should be designed to clarify women's situation and position in society, through the improvement of definitions, categories and concepts used for the collection of statistics and information on women... It should also elaborate general methodologies as guidelines for development planning and for elaborating research projects. In addition, the Institute should encourage other institutions to conduct research on the present situation of women and its historical perspective in societal, economic, political and cultural life, or itself undertake these tasks" (paragraph 10).

18. "The training programmes of the Institute should be closely linked to its research programme. The type of training to be offered should include symposia, seminars, in-service training and courses of varying duration, many of which would be organized in collaboration with the regional centres and national universities and institutes. Some of the training should take place in relevant organizations of the United Nations system" (paragraph 11).

19. The objectives of the training programmes were further elaborated (paragraph 12):

- To develop knowledge and consciousness of women's position in society and its impact on development;
- To generate innovative techniques and new behavioural patterns and disseminate information on effective training programmes;
- To provide intellectual stimulation for scholars and researchers and to generate concepts, new ideas and strategies for the advancement of women;
- To teach techniques for planning, decision making, leadership and group organization;
- To promote training in modern technology for women in agricultural and industrial production, commerce and other services.

20. The Group of Experts felt that "priority attention should be given to information development, collection and dissemination as there was a general lack of awareness about women and the relationship of their situation to societal aspirations, as well as a lack of awareness among women as a major constraint on the advancement of women" (paragraph 14).

21. Many of these activities were carried out by the Institute as originally envisaged, and the achievements of INSTRAW can be seen from the reports to ECOSOC and the General Assembly, as well as from the extensive list of its publications.[7] In successive resolutions, the General Assembly expressed "its satisfaction at the significance and scope of the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women".[8] Furthermore, in December 1991, the General Assembly noted "with appreciation" that the Institute was maintaining "its dual approach as both an agent for sensitization on the role of women in the mainstream of development and as a centre for specialized research, training and information, particularly in new areas of interest affecting women and development". The General Assembly also commended the Institute "for its continued efforts in interlinking closely its research and training activities, especially in the field of enhanced statistics on women..." and

urged the Institute to pursue its "pioneering work", in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the Secretariat, to improve concepts and methods for statistics and indicators on the situation of elderly women.[9] The wide range of programme activities undertaken by the Institute can be illustrated by listing the components originally envisaged in INSTRAW's work programme for 1998-1999.[10]

(1) The Research Programme:

- Engendering the political agenda;
- Temporary labour migration of women;
- Database on existing gender training materials;
- Database on water resources management;
- Statistics and indicators on gender issues.

(2) The Training Programme:

- Statistics and indicators on gender issues;
- Women, environmental management and sustainable development;
- Workshop on human rights and trafficking in women;
- Manual for enhancing the use of computer-mediated communications.

(3) Information, Communication and Documentation Programme:

- Public information materials (a range of publications including "INSTRAW news");
- Public information activities, including participation in the Joint United Nations Information Committee and the United Nations Information Fair;
- Communications activities including enhancing the internal computer network, updating the INSTRAW Internet homepage, participation in WomenWatch meetings;
- Documentation Centre - acquisitions, rationalization of existing holdings, implementation of a new cataloguing system;
- Activities related to the network of Focal Points;
- Collaboration with the host country on joint projects.

(4) Inter-agency activities:

- Participation in United Nations system commissions, committees, conferences and seminars related to the substantive programme of work of the Institute;
- Participation in the joint ECE/INSTRAW/UNSD Work Session on Gender Statistics;
- Representation by Board members at several inter-agency meetings;
- Participation in substantive meetings held by various United Nations agencies and programmes;
- Hosting a training workshop on Gender Mainstreaming;
- Participating in inter-agency meetings of the United Nations system in the host country.

(5) Extrabudgetary projects:

- Preparation of a project proposal "Women Networking for Conflict Prevention", for presentation to United Nations agencies for possible collaboration;
- Preparation of a monograph "Women's Life-cycle and Ageing", as a contribution to the International Year of the Older Person;
- Commissioning a paper "Engendering the Global Agenda: A Success Story of Women and the United Nations";
- Presentation of research papers at various seminars and conferences held in

Cartagena, Colombia; Santander, Spain; Beirut, Lebanon; and Ankara, Turkey.

(6) Internship Programme:

- Six students participated in this programme in 1998, three at the Institute's Headquarters in Santo Domingo and three at the Liaison Office in New York.

B. Evaluating the outputs of INSTRAW

22. In the short time that was available to the Inspectors for the preparation of this report, it was not possible for them to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the outputs of INSTRAW, and this chapter necessarily draws on other sources for that purpose. Nevertheless, the Inspectors had before them selected publications of INSTRAW, and were also able to peruse the progress reports presented to the Board of Trustees by successive Directors of the Institute, the reports of the Board of Trustees to ECOSOC, and the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. The Inspectors wish to commend INSTRAW for the wide scope of the Women in Development programmes and the imaginativeness of the projects which have been nurtured by the Institute over almost two decades.

23. One of the important achievements of INSTRAW relates to statistics on women - before this work, there was a paucity of statistics which were gender specific, particularly in respect of Women in Development. Major publications related to concepts and methods were prepared in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Office, which secured their later implementation in practice. Another major success has been in the valuation of women's work in the informal sectors of the economy. The Institute collaborated with the OECD and EUROSTAT in this work, leading to the inclusion of this item in the latest revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA).

24. Another aspect of the mainstreaming of women-related issues can be found in the joint projects on water and sanitation, and new and renewable sources of energy, which have involved United Nations system-wide cooperation, and reporting to the Committees on Natural Resources and New and Renewable Sources of Energy.

25. In cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, INSTRAW has developed innovative multimedia training packages based on the modular approach to training. According to the first Director of the Institute, INSTRAW has trained more than 3,000 trainers in its specialized fields. The Institute has made important progress in strengthening public information on Women in Development, gaining considerable recognition for its journal "INSTRAW news", and leaflets, videos and artistic posters. It has also been at the forefront in exploring the role of communication technology in the advancement of women.

26. At the more academic level, a research study which explored the link between the macroeconomy and the microeconomy resulted in the publication Women and the World Economy, published by the Oxford University Press in 1985, and translated into Spanish and Japanese. This collaboration with commercial publishers required additional work in order to clarify copyrights, which was later helpful to the entire United Nations system. The Institute also pioneered research on microenterprises and the access of women to microcredit facilities, which is now recognized as an important means of reducing poverty and increasing the self-employment of women.

27. The Inspectors consider that it is important to emphasize in this evaluation that the Institute has played a specific role in the mainstreaming of women's issues into the work of the United Nations system, adopting innovative research and training methodologies and mutually

agreed cooperative arrangements, and interacting with the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, and the policy-making bodies, primarily the subsidiaries of ECOSOC.

28. It cannot be denied that the Institute was given a very broad mandate, or that it has striven hard to fulfil that mandate against difficult odds. However, the absence of specific programme guidelines in the mandate has also been problematic, and at times given rise to criticism. An evaluation report prepared in 1991 recorded the opinion that "INSTRAW has tried to get involved in all important WID issues and to claim expertise in many different fields in which in fact it had no expertise".[11] It should be noted, however, that at this stage INSTRAW was acting catalytically to launch projects in areas which had not been sufficiently explored by the United Nations system.

29. On more substantive matters, while the 1991 evaluation report expressed some reservations about INSTRAW's training programme in "Water Supply and Sanitation", it was in fact highly complimentary about many of the outputs of the Institute. On the quality of INSTRAW's major research and training programmes, the report commented that "the programme on statistics on women and the programme on the measurement of women's contributions to the informal sector undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office are very good".[12] It also praised INSTRAW's programme to design methodologies to measure women's economic contributions in the informal sector and to make national accounts more sensitive to women's contributions as being "quite innovative and pathbreaking".[13]

30. The authors of the 1991 evaluation report concluded that INSTRAW was "an extremely important institute in the field of Women in Development with a lot of potential that may be more fully realized in the future".[14] Through its medium-term plan for 1990-1995, INSTRAW tried to exploit that potential by focusing "more of its activities on the regional and national levels in order to assist in the realization and implementation of research findings which aim at the integration of women in the mainstream of development".[15] A comprehensive review of the Institute's activities and efforts to bring these objectives to fruition was contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in autumn 1995.[16]

31. In its recent analysis of the current financial crisis, INSTRAW presented a measure of the implementation rate of its research and training programmes, using a simple ratio based on the number of outputs completed by the end of the biennium for which they were planned. By this measure, programme implementation was strongest in the biennia 1990-1991 and 1992-1993, at 71 and 64 per cent, respectively, but there was a decrease in the 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 biennia, to 43 and 40 per cent, respectively.[17] This fall is hardly surprising since, as is shown below, it coincided with the decline of both the level of paid contributions (table 1), and the occupancy rate of professional posts (table 3), particularly those at the most senior levels, and also with the "inordinate delay in deciding on the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM since 1993".[18] But the outcome was the proverbial vicious circle: falling implementation rates undermined the confidence of donors, and pledges fell further. In a direct communication to the Inspectors, the biggest donor country stated that the Institute's "disappointing outputs" was one reason for its reduction in contributions since 1996.

32. Taking these factors into account, the Inspectors commend the Institute for its achievement in implementing its wide-reaching programme with such slim resources. Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to devise a comprehensive measure of the productivity of the Institute, the Inspectors' review of the outputs of INSTRAW over the long term has convinced them that the Institute represents very good "value for money" to the Member States of the United Nations, and certainly merits their continuing support.

IV. THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF INSTRAW

A. Some facts and figures

33. As noted above, INSTRAW's autonomous status requires it to raise all of its funds from "voluntary contributions from States, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, foundations and private sources" (Article VI, paragraph 1, of the Statute).

34. Initially, the costs of the preparations leading to the establishment of the Institute were charged against the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. In the progress report on the Institute made to the first session of the Board of Trustees in October 1979, it was noted that this charging arrangement had been terminated and that all further expenditures would be charged to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Institute.[19] The same report notes that as at 30 June 1979, a total amount of $1,806,963 had been pledged to the Institute, of which $1,639,882 had already been paid to the United Nations. The largest proportion of this total, however, was a contribution of $1 million from the Government of Iran for initial operations.

35. It is necessary to distinguish between funds which are pledged by Member States at the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, and funds which they actually contribute to the Trust Fund of INSTRAW. Contributions do not always match pledges and may vary in either direction from the amount pledged, while some countries which do not make pledges actually do contribute. Pledges made to INSTRAW and contributions paid to its Trust Fund for the period 1978 to 1998 are listed in table 1, which shows total contributions exceeding total pledges in every year for which annual data are given, and by a considerable margin in many years. These figures support the view that the uncertainty embedded in the concept of voluntary funding may have forced programme planning onto unrealistically short time horizons, a view reiterated in the progress reports of successive Directors to the Board of Trustees, and repeated in the reports of the Board of Trustees to ECOSOC.

36. The information in table 1 is a summary of country-specific data provided directly to the Inspectors by the most recent former Director of the Institute. The detailed data show that 76 countries, both developed and developing, have supported INSTRAW financially in the 20 years since 1978. The Inspectors stress the widespread support given to the Institute by developing countries: while the contribution of these countries as a group may be only a small proportion of the total in each year, the fact that these relatively poorer countries are contributing at all underlines the importance attached by them to the mandate of the Institute to provide research and training programmes for the advancement of women in the developing world.

37. Data available on a biennial basis show that up to and including the biennium 1990-1991, voluntary contributions to the Institute's Trust Fund increased steadily, from $797,567 in 1984-1985 to $4,158,629 in 1990-1991.[20] The latter biennium represents the peak level for contributions and it is notable that the funds donated in this two-year period represent 20 per cent of the total funds contributed between 1978 and 1998. It was suggested during interviews for this report that, over its lifetime, the Institute has been significantly underfunded in relation to its far-reaching mandate, and the Inspectors concur that the total figure for contributions of only some $20.7 million in the period 1978-1998 would appear to support that contention. The Inspectors note that the level of funding in excess of $4 million achieved in the biennium 1990-1991 has not been maintained and that the Institute has suffered a sharp and accelerating decline in funding in the subsequent biennia.

TABLE I

Pledges and contributions paid to INSTRAW, 1978-1998

	Pledges (dollars)	Annual change (per cent)	Contributions paid (dollars)	Annual change (per cent)
1978-1989	6 752 817	n/a	7 626 855	n/a
1990	622 502	n/a	2 313 742	n/a
1991	855 253	37.4	1 844 888	- 20.3
1992	1 426 937	66.8	1 924 082	4.3
1993	984 891	- 31.0	1 574 686	- 18.2
1994	837 143	- 15.0	1 488 288	- 5.5
1995	779 048	- 6.9	1 330 262	- 10.6
1996	459 522	- 41.0	1 103 395	- 17.1
1997	448 243	- 2.5	810 720	- 26.5
1998	371 679	- 17.0	664 630	- 18.0
Total above	**13 538 035**	**n/a**	**20 681 548**	**n/a**

Source: INSTRAW

Note: Excludes contributions in kind.

38. The annual data presented in table 1 show that contributions remained buoyant in 1992 at almost $2 million, and that there had been a surge in the amounts pledged for that year compared with 1991. The sustained decline actually began in 1993, both in terms of amounts pledged for that year (a fall of 31 per cent) and in paid contributions (a fall of some 18 per cent).[21] While the factors responsible for this situation, and the causal relationships between them, are varied and complex, it is striking that the beginning of the sharp deterioration in funding coincided with the issuance in 1993 of the report of the Secretary-General's Task Force into the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM. This issue is discussed in more detail below.

B. The immediate financial crisis

39. Although the expansion of INSTRAW's programme activities has in general been constrained by its modest financial resources, it has still managed to deliver a wide range of programme outputs while remaining within its approved programme budget in each biennium. The Institute has never allowed its liabilities to exceed its assets, and it is to be commended for its sound financial management. The current biennium (1998-1999) has, however, presented INSTRAW with its most serious financial crisis to date. As can be seen in table 1, paid contributions amounted to only $664,630 in 1998. For 1999, $373,341 has been pledged, roughly the same as the level of pledges in 1998, so that the level of paid contributions in 1999

could also be expected to match those of 1998.

40. The financial situation of INSTRAW as at 10 December 1998 was presented by the Director in her progress report to the Board of Trustees for 1998.[22] The balance in INSTRAW's Trust Fund as at 1 January 1998 was almost $2 million, to which was added paid contributions and bank interest, to give a total amount of a little over $2.7 million. The financial requirements for 1998 for operations, programme implementation and programme support costs were estimated at some $2.1 million, leaving an estimated balance of only some $600,000 in the Trust Fund at year end. With estimated requirements for 1999 at $1.9 million, it was clear that the programme could not be fully funded in the second half of the biennium.

41. At the beginning of January 1999, the United Nations Controller wrote to INSTRAW's Director about the financial situation of the Institute. He pointed out that actual expenditures for 1998 had fallen short of expectations by $700,000, which, added to the $600,000 balance mentioned above, gave a balance of $1.3 million in the Trust Fund at the beginning of 1999. The Controller authorized expenditures for 1999 of $700,000 to permit the Institute to operate at its current level until August 1999. Of the $600,000, the Controller set aside a reserve of $200,000, and retained the balance of $400,000 "until we see our way more clearly about the future direction of INSTRAW".[23]

42. The Inspectors note that the communication from the Controller does not take account of pledges already made to the Institute for 1999, and consider that he may have erred on the side of caution in his authorization for expenditures for 1999. This decision has had serious repercussions for the Institute since it has entailed the postponement of the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees,[24] the continued freeze of recruitment at the professional level, the separation of general service staff, and the sharp curtailment of programme activities. It is crucial that the Controller monitor the Trust Fund of INSTRAW and adjust the current allotment in line with contributions received so that the Institute might continue to operate at least through the end of the current biennium to ensure smooth programme delivery.

C. Fund-raising activities of INSTRAW

43. As already noted, core funding of INSTRAW is derived from voluntary contributions from Member States. In addition, the Institute receives earmarked contributions for extrabudgetary projects from a variety of sources, including other organizations of the United Nations system as well as external entities, and often for the conduct of joint projects. For example, contributions to specific projects have been received from UNCTAD, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNU, ILO and the regional commissions of ECOSOC. The resources of the Institute have also been boosted by contributions in kind, particularly in respect of INSTRAW's participation at seminars and conferences relevant to its work, while the host country has continued to provide certain services to the Headquarters in Santo Domingo.

44. From the outset, the major responsibility for fund-raising has rested with the Director of the Institute. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, the responsibilities of the Director were elaborated in some detail, including "seeking resources for the Institute from Governments, foundations, international organizations and other appropriate sources".[25] It is evident that the first Director was well aware of the financial challenges facing INSTRAW and the need for fund-raising was taken very seriously. At various times, proposals were put forward for establishing a sub-committee of the Board for fund-raising, and for a high-level fund-raising group composed of eminent persons from outside the Institute, with a network of volunteers reporting to this group who would play an advocacy role for the Institute.[26] INSTRAW also had extensive consultations on the modalities of organizing a pledging conference of non-governmental organizations in support of the Institute. These were

imaginative ideas, but unfortunately they were not carried through. The Inspectors consider that they merit further attention at this time.

45. The Institute has made numerous contacts with philanthropic institutions, and reviewed the possibilities of seeking further financial arrangements in the private sector. The Board also authorized the employment of professional fund-raisers on a consultancy basis, but this proved to be unsuccessful as there was a lack of understanding of women's issues by the consultants used at that time (1982).

46. Most of these activities were initiated by the first Director of the Institute, who regarded fund-raising as a major priority, but who has also acknowledged to the Inspectors that it was a very time-consuming process. Indeed, the fund-raising responsibility has been a considerable burden on all the Directors of the Institute. The most recent former Director provided the Inspectors with documentation related to her fund-raising campaign in 1998. Although encouraged by the interest shown by potential donors in the Institute's revitalized work programme, the Director expressed her disappointment that the hoped-for dollars were not forthcoming.

47. It was discouraging that the proposals which INSTRAW submitted in 1998 to the United Nations Foundation, Inc. (UNF), which allocates funds from the Turner gift, were not approved, particularly as "Population and Women" is one of the three areas of concentration of UNF. The Inspectors regret that their request for a meeting with the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), which administers UNF, could not be accommodated.

D. Voluntary funding: the wider perspective

48. It can be argued that the concept of voluntary funding is seriously flawed, since the mandates which have been given to various United Nations entities funded in this manner can, in general, only be fulfilled in the medium to longer term, yet the financial uncertainty means that they can only operate, and plan, in the short term. While these financial imperatives may lead to more efficient use of the scarce resources, the Inspectors consider that, on balance, the financial uncertainty is a major impediment to effective programme delivery. In the case of INSTRAW, the Inspectors noted frequent references in annual reports to budgetary constraints on operations and activities. For example, the Director was unable to attend a major international seminar on "Research and Training Related to Women" held in Montreal in 1982 "owing to budgetary constraints", and the Institute's visibility in its field may have been seriously impaired over the years by such restrictions. There have also been some questionable interventions by the Secretariat with detrimental effects on the Institute's fund-raising. For example, the former Acting Director reported to the Inspectors that she was denied authorization by the Secretariat to travel for fund-raising activities at a time when these were of crucial importance to the Institute's financial future.

49. In an early report to ECOSOC (1980), a member of the Board made "a strong plea for establishing a regular and stable funding mechanism, which would allow organs like the Institute...to plan and realize their programmes in a more stable manner".[27] The first Director of the Institute observed that "during pledging conferences for United Nations developmental activities...research and training, however essential for progress, do not always receive priority in financing, especially in the current unfavourable economic situation, when the United Nations budget has been maintained at zero growth and when voluntary contributions made by Governments for developmental activities have generally followed a decreasing trend. This situation is adversely affecting small organizations like the other United Nations research institutions which have similar difficulties".[28]

50. In the course of nearly two decades, the Institute has battled with this financing problem and little has changed. During an interview for this report, the Inspectors noted the comments of the Controller of the United Nations that voluntary funds were hard to come by unless they were for humanitarian affairs, and that it was not easy for a small Institute to survive. The Inspectors consider that INSTRAW has become an undeserving casualty in the fight for funds which has characterized United Nations programming in the 1990s. But the Institute has been competing on an uneven playing field. The expansion of the Division for the Advancement of Women, funded largely through the regular budget, and sheltering under the umbrella of the Division for Economic and Social Affairs, is a case in point.

E. INSTRAW's financing options

51. The Inspectors consider that the issue of financing is at the heart of the problems facing INSTRAW, not just at this moment of deep financial distress, but throughout the Institute's history, and into its future. Equally they acknowledge that the hardest task facing the Institute and those who are genuinely concerned with its survival, is to find ways to put its financing on a firmer footing.

52. The Inspectors believe that Member States should support the Institute to fulfil the specific mandate for research, training and information dissemination for Women in Development which they themselves have given it. This requires continuing commitments - or recommitments - of donor countries to INSTRAW at the annual pledging conference, and donations which at least maintain their value in real terms. It is also essential that outstanding arrears of pledges are paid promptly.

53. The suggestions which follow are a synthesis of ideas which emerged in the course of discussions for the preparation of this report. While the list is not original or exhaustive, it does at least underline the complexity of developing a comprehensive fund-raising strategy.

- Approaches to governments with a view to increasing funding through regular pledges, taking account of national government budget cycles.
- Approaches to bilateral technical cooperation agencies such as NORAD, CIDA, USAID etc.
- Approaches to private foundations such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Germany), Rockefeller Foundation (United States) etc.
- Development of joint programmes on the basis of co-financing with United Nations system organizations and other multilateral organizations such as the European Union, OECD, OSCE etc.
- Approaches to the business community, especially in the United States where contributions are tax free, and targeting companies making products for women.
- Approaches to private benefactors.
- Submission of further proposals to the UNF for funding by the Turner donation.
- Seeking modest financing from non-governmental organizations for jointly agreed programmes at the national, regional and possibly global level.
- Seeking contributions in kind, particularly from the business community e.g. for modernizing electronic equipment.

A fund-raising strategy should encompass clearly defined programmes and expected results, hence INSTRAW's fund-raising activities should be closely linked to its "Strategic Plan and Work Programme, 2000-2003".

54. It must be stressed that fund-raising is a time-consuming activity which has to be pursued on a continuous basis to be effective. It is questionable whether the Director of INSTRAW has

sufficient time to devote to it given the multifarious tasks of the Office, and the Inspectors consider that a full-time fund-raising post, perhaps located in the Institute's Liaison Office in New York, should be added to INSTRAW's professional staffing structure.

55. Greater visibility of INSTRAW is a prerequisite for more successful fund-raising. To that end, it is essential that the Board of Trustees take a more active role in fund-raising through the regional networks of each individual Board Member. A sub-committee of the Board should be established to coordinate this work. In addition, there should be an expansion of regional offices, as originally envisaged in the Statute of the Institute, perhaps supported initially by contributions in kind, such as office space. The regional commissions of ECOSOC, as ex officio Board members, could assist the Institute in setting up regional offices. The Inspectors understand that some initial proposals have recently been explored for establishing an office of INSTRAW in Geneva, which would enable the Institute to strengthen cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights and other United Nations entities and agencies. INSTRAW should also expand its existing network of national focal points, putting emphasis on national research and training institutions.

V. THE STAFFING SITUATION OF INSTRAW

A. The staffing structure

56. From its inception, it was the policy of the Board of Trustees that the Institute would be staffed by a small number of professionals who would be engaged in coordination and programme support activities, while the major part of the substantive work would be undertaken by qualified institutions and individual consultants. This was in accordance with the guidelines issued both by the Group of Experts which met in 1976 and in a report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 1978.[29] This report also stated that "the organizational structure of the Institute shall include an administrative unit as well as three technical units concerned with information, research and training respectively".

57. Accordingly, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, which was presented to the first session of the Board of Trustees in October 1979 as a memorandum of the Secretary-General, initially envisaged seven posts at the professional level and above:

- Director (D-2)
- Deputy Director (D-1)
- Chief, Research Unit (P-5)
- Chief, Training Unit (P-5)
- Chief, Information and Documentation Unit (P-5)
- Administrative Officer (P-4)
- Associate Professional Officer (P-2/1)

In addition, six general service posts were proposed, one at the Principal level.[30]

58. It was expected that this initial staffing table would soon be supplemented by additional recruitment at both the professional and the general service level, to support the work programme of the Institute as it developed. It should be noted that the original staffing structure was devised in something of a vacuum, well before the appointment of the first Director on 4 June 1981, and well before the elaboration of detailed plans for the work programme. The Inspectors have included it in this report because they consider that it represents something of an ideal - and a glimpse of how INSTRAW might have even more effectively pursued its mandate for Women in Development, as originally proposed by the conference in Mexico City, if it had had the financial support to enable it to flourish from the beginning. In the event, the Board decided to eliminate the post of Deputy Director from the budget proposals for 1980-1981, while retaining the proposal for three Chiefs of Unit at the P-5 level. In subsequent biennia, however, proposed and actual recruitment proceeded in a much more piecemeal fashion, partly because of delays in getting the Institute "up and running", and partly because of financial constraints.

59. The staffing table presented in the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983 was much more modest, in part because detailed work plans had not yet been developed for the main programmes of the Institute, but also because of uncertainties over the date of transfer of the Institute to Santo Domingo.[31] The post of Chief of the Information and Documentation Unit (P-5) was replaced by a Second Officer post (P-3) but with the same duties and responsibilities. The separate Research and Training Units were merged into a single Section to be headed by one Chief, who was also given the responsibility of supervising the secretariat of the Institute in the absence of the Director. The merger of the research and training branches was regarded as a temporary measure undertaken "to foster a close relationship between the two major activities of the Institute" but also "in the light of the financial constraints faced by the Institute at the...time".[32]

TABLE 2

Approved posts of INSTRAW, 1982-1999

Biennium	PROFESSIONAL LEVEL AND ABOVE						TOTAL Prof.	GENERAL SERVICE		TOTAL GS	GRAND TOTAL
	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2/1		Principal	Other		
1982-1983	1	-	1	2	1	1	**6**	1	7	**8**	**14**
1984-1985	1	-	1	3	2	2	**9**	5	10	**15**	**24**
1986-1987	1	1	1	2	2	2	**9**	6	13	**19**	**28**
1988-1989	1	1	2	2	2	2	**10**	1	37	**38**	**48**
1990-1991	1	1	2	1	2	2	**9**	1	33	**34**	**43**
1992-1993	1	1	2	2	1	2	**9**	4	30	**34**	**43**
1994-1995	1	1	2	2	1	2	**9**	4	26	**30**	**39**
1996-1997	1	1	1	2	2	2	**9**	6	19	**25**	**34**
1998-1999	1	1	1	2	2	2	**9**	4	21	**25**	**34**

Source: Proposed programme budgets presented to the annual sessions of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW, 1982-1983 to 1998-1999.

60. The approved biennial staffing structure of INSTRAW is shown in table 2. The number of professional posts rose from six in 1982-1983 to nine in 1984-1985, the substantive units being headed by a Senior Officer (P-5) for Research and Training and a First Officer (P-4) for Information, Communication and Documentation. The Senior Officer post heading the Research and Training Unit was upgraded to a Principal Officer post (D-1) in the 1986-1987 biennium, and the Unit was strengthened with the temporary redeployment of the P-4 post from the information programme. It appears that the Information, Communication and Documentation Unit was forced to take second place in resource allocation in the 1980s, as is reflected in its lightweight professional staffing structure. Tight financial constraints meant that the information function was effectively downgraded in this period, contrary to the prescriptions of the Group of Experts which felt that "priority attention should be given to information development, collection and dissemination".[33] It was not until the 1992-1993 biennium that the information programme was headed by a Senior Officer, and then only because a P-5 post was redeployed from the Research and Training Unit.

61. What is notable from table 2 is that the staffing structure at the professional level was in effect established in 1984 at nine posts, and it appears that the Institute tried to compensate for this meagre number of professional posts by expanding recruitment at the general service level. As noted above, the rationale from the outset was to maintain a small core of professional staff at INSTRAW and use consultants and institutions for much of the substantive work. The Inspectors consider, however, that approved staffing at the professional level was too small - almost skeletal - for viable operation of the Institute, and recall that the original intention was for a much fuller complement of senior staff.

62. The review of the work programme and achievements of INSTRAW presented in an earlier chapter of this report revealed that the work of the core staff has always included far more than the coordination and programme support roles originally envisaged, and that they have been responsible for a significant part of the substantive outputs of the Institute. The Inspectors commend all the staff of the Institute for their dedication and hard work, and their outstanding contributions to the Women in Development programmes.

63. The Inspectors consider that many of the difficulties experienced by the Institute may be directly related to the inadequate number of approved professional posts, and to the grading of those posts. Much has been said about the problems of recruiting professional staff to the Institute, but this must be set in the context of the grade level of the posts on offer, and the complexity and responsibility involved in each job. For example, INSTRAW's approved senior staffing for the biennium 1998-1999 includes a Director (D-2), a Deputy Director (D-1) and only one Senior Officer post (P-5). This compares unfavourably with the Division for the Advancement of Women, which has a Director (D-2), a Deputy Director (D-1), and four Senior Officer posts (P-5). The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women includes, in addition, an established D-1 post (Focal Point for Women) and another Senior Officer post (P-5) reporting directly to the Assistant Secretary-General, while approval is actively being sought for a third post at the D-1 level (extrabudgetary) for gender mainstreaming issues (see Annex I). While the Inspectors support the strengthening of senior level posts under the umbrella of the Office of the Special Adviser, as was recommended by an earlier report of the JIU,[34] they consider that INSTRAW's senior staffing structure looks feeble in comparison with that of DAW, particularly in relation to the tripartite global mandate which the Institute is required to fulfil, and the high level of intellectual input required for research activities. It should be recalled here that the merger of the research and training functions of the Institute into one Unit was originally considered as a temporary measure brought about by financial imperatives; it is regrettable that the arrangement was allowed to prevail. The Inspectors hope that the recommendations of this present report will have a similar outcome for INSTRAW as the earlier report did for DAW.

64. Apart from the grading disparities noted above, the Institute's professional staff suffer additional disadvantages in respect of their status in the United Nations system. As all posts are funded from voluntary contributions, they are all classified as temporary, no appointment can extend beyond the end of any biennium, and service is limited to INSTRAW, so that staff face uncertainty and insecurity in their careers. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the report of the Secretary-General in 1976 recommended that "in addition to the director, five or six professional persons...be appointed as United Nations staff", and "additional professional full-time staff on short-term contracts should also be recruited on a consultancy basis". The first Director of the Institute has informed the Inspectors that there was some controversy over whether INSTRAW professional staff should be governed by the 100 or 200 series of the Staff Rules, but agreement was reached to apply the 100 series of rules with the contractual qualification that appointments were restricted to service with INSTRAW. The general service staff of INSTRAW also face disadvantages in career advancement, notably in their exclusion from the G to P examination.

B. Occupancy rates of INSTRAW's posts

65. In preparations for this report, the Inspectors heard more about the problems of post vacancies at INSTRAW than about the deficiencies in the staffing structure considered above. Table 3, which presents the occupancy rates of the approved posts, shows that local recruitment at the general service level has posed few problems, as might be expected in a developing country where the unemployment rate is relatively high. At the professional level the picture is more varied, with fairly high occupancy rates in the period from 1988 to 1993, but a deterioration

TABLE 3

Occupancy rate of approved posts of INSTRAW, 1984-1998

Biennium	PROFESSIONAL LEVEL AND ABOVE		GENERAL SERVICE	
	Posts	Occupancy (per cent)	Posts	Occupancy (per cent)
1984-1985	9	61	15	90
1986-1987	9	83	19	100
1988-1989	10	100	38	84
1990-1991	9	89	34	93
1992-1993	9	89	34	90
1994-1995	9	72	30	96
1996-1997	9	56	25	96
1998	9	33	25	80/48

Source: INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.3, 5 March 1999.
Note: In 1998, occupancy rate in general service posts was 80 and 48 per cent in the first and second halves of the year, respectively.

thereafter. It should be noted, however, that even one vacant post at the professional level will impact severely on the activities and outputs of the Institute when the core number of professional posts is so small.

66. In the course of preparing this evaluation, it was suggested to the Inspectors that INSTRAW had found it difficult to recruit qualified professional staff because of its location in a developing country. Statements to this effect appeared, however, to be based on personal opinions and anecdotes, but no substantive evidence was provided in support of this viewpoint. The Inspectors consider that it is more probable that problems in filling professional posts have been related to the overloading and undergrading of posts, as noted above, to the temporary nature of those posts, and to the fact that service is limited to INSTRAW which effectively discriminates against post holders who wish to develop their careers within the United Nations system. It is also interesting to record that the first, and only long-serving, Director of the Institute found "no difficulties in attracting qualified women and men, including the secondments from the UN system. The interest for secondments was especially high caused by the participation in the programmes of the Institute or by the prospects for promotion".[35]

67. The decline in the post occupancy rates from 1994 coincided with a period of great uncertainty for the Institute, when the Secretary-General's proposal to merge INSTRAW and UNIFEM was being actively discussed. This in itself could explain why so many key posts remained unfilled. As discussed in the following section, the post of Director of the Institute was filled on an interim basis from the beginning of 1994 through September 1997 by the incumbent of the D-1 post in the Research and Training Unit, thus sharply diluting staff resources at the

most senior levels for a period of almost four years. Furthermore, in 1995, the key posts of Chief, Information, Communications and Documentation Unit, and Chief, Administration Unit, both at the P-5 level, became vacant, and they have remained vacant up to the present time. The circumstances surrounding the latter case are examined in the next chapter, but it is beyond the scope of the present report to consider in detail the reasons for each post vacancy.

68. In her progress report on the implementation of the work programme for 1995, the Acting Director noted that various posts at the managerial and professional levels remained vacant (Chief of Research and Training, Social Affairs Officer, Chief of Information, Communication and Documentation, Chief of Administrative and Support Services, and Public Information Officer).[36] The problem was discussed at length by the Board of Trustees at its fifteenth and sixteenth sessions in 1995 and 1996, respectively, but the ensuing recommendations were not implemented owing to several "external factors" which affected the Institute's "ability to perform". These were identified as the recruitment freeze and downsizing process of the United Nations Secretariat, which slowed the process of recruitment for the Institute, and the need to balance the budget of the Institute which had not received sufficient financial resources for the 1996-1997 biennium. The lengthy process of preparation of vacancies was also mentioned as a problem.[37]

69. As noted above, the financial situation worsened in the current biennium (1998-1999), and it was necessary to rephase planned programme activities. Recruitment at both the general service and professional levels was frozen, and only three out of nine posts were occupied at the latter level throughout 1998 (Director, Social Affairs Officer and Associate Social Affairs Officer). The Director was forced to begin the process of separating local staff from service, with eight posts abolished in the second half of 1998, and a further seven at the beginning of 1999. This was followed by the announcement of the Director of her own imminent resignation.

C. Occupancy of the Director's post

70. The Office of the Director of the Institute has been assigned enormous responsibilities. The Office must provide overall direction, management, leadership and supervision to all the programmes of the Institute; it must take the necessary actions to ensure an adequate level of funds in the Institute's Trust Fund; it must liaise with United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and the public at large; and it must ensure that the activities of the Institute are conducted in line with relevant United Nations rules, regulations and procedures.[38] All of these functions have been vested in the Director of the Institute, supported in recent biennia by four general service staff. The Inspectors consider that the Office of the Director is overstretched and that the Executive Direction and Management branch of the Institute should be strengthened by the addition of a Deputy Director with responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Institute. This division of labour would help to address the criticisms of the quality of INSTRAW's management since the mid-1990s, which have been expressed by some of the Institute's donors.

71. It is of utmost importance that the post of Director be filled on a continuous basis. The Institute was fortunate in its first operational decade to enjoy the stability bestowed by a long-serving Director (mid-1981 to mid-1990), in sharp contrast to the subsequent decade which has been marked by interim arrangements and appointments of ever shorter tenure. For a one-year period, the incumbent of the D-1 post of the Research and Training Unit was Acting Director, until the second Director of the Institute took office in July 1991. Following her departure in February 1994, there was an extended period of uncertainty lasting through September 1997 when the incumbent of the D-1 post acted first as Officer-in-Charge, and then as Acting Director.

72. Following the reaffirmation of the mandate of INSTRAW in the Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations Secretariat began the long process of recruitment for the Director of the Institute, and a candidate with a strong research background and excellent academic credentials was eventually appointed in October 1997. The Inspectors regret, however, that the third Director served only 17 months, resigning at the end of February 1999 to take up the appointment of Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women in New York, and thus leaving the Institute in the midst of the most serious financial crisis in its history.

73. In an interview with the Inspectors prior to her resignation from INSTRAW, the Director was quite candid in her assessment of the future of the Institute, appearing to regard its imminent closure as a foregone conclusion.[39] Whilst acknowledging that the Institute is facing a serious financial crisis at the present time, the Inspectors reject the notion that it cannot survive, since other small institutions in the United Nations system have emerged successfully from similar crises in the past. Nevertheless, with its most senior post vacant once again, the Institute lacks leadership at a critical moment. The Inspectors urge the United Nations Secretariat to make an immediate temporary appointment of Acting Director of INSTRAW in Santo Domingo, and to expedite the recruitment process so that this key post of Director of the Institute may be filled in the shortest possible time. These are essential steps if donor confidence in INSTRAW is to be restored.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

A. The background

74. Articles IV through VII of the Statute of INSTRAW set out the basic arrangements with respect to the personnel, financial and general administration of the Institute, and these were elaborated in the Secretary-General's bulletin of 17 January 1986.[40] Thus, the Institute must abide by the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as well as additional guidelines and conditions established by the Secretary-General. For example, the Institute must submit its programme budget to the Controller of the United Nations for review before it can be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval; it must seek the concurrence of the Controller before it can accept voluntary contributions, whether they be earmarked or unrestricted; and it is subject to audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors. In addition, established recruitment procedures must be followed in the case of professional appointments for one year or more.

75. INSTRAW is provided with administrative and other support by the Secretary-General, "it being understood that no extra costs to the regular budget of the United Nations are incurred" (Article VII of the Statute). Thus, an amount equivalent to 4 per cent of the estimated appropriations in a given biennium is reimbursed to the United Nations to cover support services provided to INSTRAW by the United Nations Secretariat.

76. On the basis of these arrangements, the Institute is dependent on the United Nations Secretariat for the efficient functioning of major areas of its operations. Given INSTRAW's small core staff and limited financial resources, any administrative errors or delays can have a disproportionate impact on the operations of the Institute. One such error, which was identified by an internal audit, was the failure of the Budget Division to inform the Treasury Division of a pledge of $200,000 to INSTRAW from a regular donor, dated December 1989. This resulted in a long delay before the appropriate follow-up action was initiated and the pledge was not collected until 1991.[41] Other problems relate to the lengthy recruitment process which has slowed appointments to vacant professional posts, with deleterious effects on the Institute's activities, in common with other substantive programmes in the United Nations system.

B. The perplexing case of INSTRAW's Chief of Administration

77. The administrative problems cited above have had negative consequences, both for the day-to-day running of INSTRAW and, more importantly perhaps, for its reputation with its donor countries. The single most damaging incident, and the one most often quoted to the Inspectors, is considered in more detail in this section.

78. In April 1988 a staff member of the United Nations with a permanent contract was assigned to INSTRAW to take up the post of Chief of Administrative and Support Services (P-5 level). For reasons entirely outside the control of INSTRAW, this individual left the Institute in November 1994 following the request of the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS), and was assigned elsewhere. Nevertheless, at the insistence of DDSMS, the P-5 post at INSTRAW had to be blocked pending his possible return (i.e., one of only nine posts), and his pay and allowances continued to be debited to INSTRAW, cumulatively amounting to over $197,000 by the end of February 1996. In addition, irregular payments to the same individual of dependency allowance and educational grant were identified in the amount of just over $43,000.[42]

79. This matter caused much consternation at the Institute, and the Board of Trustees "expressed serious concern about the drain on resources by the continued encumbrance of a

former P-5 post, and the subsequent consultancies in the administrative section of the Institute, and requested that the matter be resolved in an urgent manner and that INSTRAW be compensated accordingly".[43]

80. In April 1996, the United Nations Board of External Auditors wrote an audit observation in respect of the "pay and allowances of a P-5 UN staff charged to INSTRAW".[44] It was noted that although this individual was "requisitioned and loaned elsewhere, his pay and allowances continued to be debited to the accounts of INSTRAW which had cumulatively amounted to the extent of US$197,270.73 by the end of February 1996". Considering the declining resource position of INSTRAW, the shortage of staff, and the key nature of the post in question, the external auditors came to the conclusion that this represented "a clear example of infructuous appropriation of the Funds of INSTRAW". The external auditors further commented that it would be appropriate to charge the pay and allowances in question to the "relevant head of account against which his services were requisitioned".

81. An examination of the correspondence on these matters between INSTRAW and responsible units of the United Nations Secretariat indicates that the problem arose partly because the staff member involved had a permanent contract, but was assigned to an institution which was only allowed by its Statute to employ staff in a temporary capacity. The responsibility for this lies with the United Nations Secretariat, but the units involved appeared to be insensitive to the negative impact of this situation on the Institute. It was brought to the attention of the Inspectors, however, that this substantial diversion of the Institute's resources was a matter of serious concern to at least one donor of INSTRAW.

VII. THE AUTONOMY OF INSTRAW: A MIXED BLESSING?

82. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is "an autonomous institution within the framework of the United Nations" (Article I of the Statute of INSTRAW). The Group of Experts suggested that the organizational and administrative structure of the Institute should reflect its concern for coordination, multidisciplinarity and flexibility, and it therefore proposed that the Institute should be an autonomous United Nations body under the supervision of a Board that would report to ECOSOC. Since it was "anticipated that the Institute would complement and support the activities of the United Nations system related to women as well as those of Governments and other bodies, the Group felt that the organizational arrangements for the Institute should facilitate coordination and communication between the Institute and those bodies. It should be developed as a key focal point for exchanging ideas and experiences".[45] Thus, autonomy was seen as the prerequisite for establishing the networking system which was considered to be the essential modus operandi for the Institute.

83. It is interesting to note, however, that the autonomous status of the Institute is further elaborated in the Statute only in Article III, paragraph 5:

> "The Board shall consider methods for enhancing the financial resources of the Institute with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of its future operations, their continuity and the Institute's autonomous character within the framework of the United Nations."

From this statement, and the marked absence of any other clear or precise definition, the Inspectors conclude that by the time the Statute came to be drafted, the autonomous status of the Institute had come to mean **financial** autonomy, as much as operational autonomy. The Statute makes clear that the Institute is required to raise all of its resources from voluntary contributions, and that its future operations, and the continuity of those operations, depends on its success in attracting voluntary funding. This financial autonomy is emphasized in the Statute by frequent references to voluntary contributions, and reinforced with explicit mention of the fact that the Institute is excluded from access to the resources of the United Nations regular budget.[46] While the Institute is required to raise all of its funds from voluntary contributions, its independence of action in this area is nevertheless constrained by the rules governing the establishment and management of trust funds, and by the conditions laid down in Article VI of the Statute of the Institute which deals with finance.

84. Aside from this caveat, the autonomous character of INSTRAW is thus most strongly in evidence in the matter of fund-raising. In contrast, the Secretary-General's bulletin which "amplifies the arrangements for provision of financial, personnel and other administrative services" to the Institute, makes clear that INSTRAW's status is very far from autonomous in those areas.[47] In fact, as noted above, the Institute has virtually no room for manoeuvre outside the "framework" of the United Nations, and while the set of rules under which INSTRAW is required to operate is clearly designed to offer certain protections to the Institute, as well as the United Nations itself, it is equally clear that the autonomous character of the Institute is somewhat illusory.

85. Arguably, INSTRAW enjoys autonomy in respect of programming matters. Indeed, INSTRAW's first Director has pointed out that the delegation of authority granted to the Institute gave it the needed autonomy to expand its areas of work based on the network mode of management. Nevertheless, constraints remain in that the work programme must be approved by the Board of Trustees, which must itself report to ECOSOC and "where appropriate to the General Assembly" (INSTRAW Statute, Article III, paragraph 3(d)).

86. The Inspectors consider that the autonomy of INSTRAW has been a mixed blessing, both for the Institute itself, and, perhaps more importantly, for Women in Development programmes. Autonomy can be seen as both an asset and a liability, but in the case of INSTRAW it is difficult to identify significant advantages. On the contrary, autonomy has appeared to be a burden to the Institute right from its inception. In her first progress report to the Board of Trustees, the first Director of the Institute observed that "the dependence of the Institute on voluntary funding represents a major problem for efficient planning of future activities..." and noted that, by necessity, all activities would have to be planned and budgeted in a short-term perspective, which "might become an impediment in the planning and organization of long-term research and training programmes..."[48]

87. The Inspectors believe that "autonomous institution" has become a useful catch-phrase for those who wish to maintain the sharp demarcation between activities which have access to the regular budget of the United Nations and those which do not.

88. The contentious issue of INSTRAW's lack of access to funding from the regular budget of the United Nations has been a recurring theme. For example, reference was made in a report of the Board of Trustees in 1983 to an exchange of views on the respective status and roles of INSTRAW and the Branch for the Advancement of Women in regard to a proposal for cooperation between INSTRAW and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, representing the Secretary-General, said that she "could not find acceptable" the proposal of INSTRAW "if the financial resources and secondment of personnel were to originate from the resources of the Secretariat" as this would "contravene the principle on which INSTRAW was created, which was that it should be financed by voluntary contributions". The response of INSTRAW was that "its mandate did not preclude it from receiving funds for the implementation of work requested by the relevant United Nations bodies and having received approval from its Board of Trustees, be the source of the regular budget fund or extrabudgetary ones (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX) of 12 May 1976, para. 5 (c))". INSTRAW also drew attention to the fact that "several United Nations bodies financed through voluntary contributions receive financial assistance from the United Nations regular budget".[49]

89. It is clear that a major disparity exists in the way that the different parts of the United Nations programmes for women's issues are financed. The Branch, now the Division, for the Advancement of Women, part of the Secretariat, and financed largely from the United Nations regular budget, has been able to flourish, and currently enjoys a large complement of staff at the most senior levels. In contrast, the voluntarily funded institutions for women have struggled to maintain their resource base, and have experienced major financial crises (UNIFEM in 1994 and INSTRAW in 1999).

90. The Inspectors wish to draw attention to the fact that other United Nations institutions which are funded primarily from voluntary contributions from Member States, also have access to the regular budget of the United Nations for a part of their financial requirements. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is a case in point. Article VII, paragraph 2, of the Statute of UNIDIR states that:

> "A subvention towards meeting the costs of the Director and the staff of the Institute may be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations. The actual amount of any subvention...may be less than, but shall not exceed, an amount equivalent to one half of the assured income of the Institute from voluntary sources in respect of the year for which a subvention is being requested. The assured income shall be that which has already been received or which has been pledged in writing by the time the level of any subvention is

being considered."

91. Furthermore, provision is made for payments from the regular budget of the United Nations for specific activities which the General Assembly may request UNIDIR to add to its regular work programme (Article VII, paragraph 3).

92. Interestingly, the Director of UNIDIR noted in a recent report that the subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations, "which is used to cover the costs of the regular staff, including the Director, is important not only economically, but also to ensure the independence of the Institute". It is difficult to reconcile the fact that UNIDIR's independence is assured by a subvention from the United Nations regular budget, while INSTRAW's independence is assured by being denied such a subvention.

93. In the United Nations proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, regular budget estimates for Disarmament include an amount of $426,000 for the subvention to UNIDIR.[50] The Inspectors take note of this precedent and would urge the General Assembly to take steps to accord equal treatment to all the small research institutes which operate within the framework of the United Nations. To that end, the Statute of INSTRAW should be amended so that the Institute may enjoy a subvention from the United Nations regular budget.

VIII. INSTRAW IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

A. The current structure

94. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is an important part of the mosaic which represents the response of the United Nations to its commitment to the equal rights of men and women, a principle which was established in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations in 1945. The pursuit of gender equality has, in practice, meant efforts to remove the barriers to equal opportunity and equal treatment for women, and this has been reflected in numerous General Assembly resolutions and other legislative instruments, in several global conferences devoted solely to the advancement of women, and in many other meetings and activities. The substantive programmes of the United Nations for the advancement of women were discussed in some detail in a JIU report of 1995.[51] These can be summarized as follows:

- The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1946 as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports on promoting women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields.

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is a comprehensive human rights treaty, dating from 1981, which aims to advance the status of women by requiring States Parties to eliminate discrimination against women in the enjoyment of all civil, political, economic and cultural rights. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the expert treaty body which monitors the implementation of the legal standards of the Convention, and also formulates suggestions and recommendations.

- The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), initially established as a Section in the United Nations Secretariat in 1946, moved to Vienna in 1979, became a Division in 1988, and moved back to New York in 1993. It acts as a catalyst for advancing the global agenda on women's issues and for mainstreaming a gender perspective both within and outside the United Nations system. Among its main responsibilities is the substantive servicing of the CSW and the CEDAW, and it has also acted as the Secretariat for the four United Nations world conferences on women.

- The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), was established in 1976 to stimulate and assist, through research, training and the collection and dissemination of information, the advancement of women and their integration in the developmental process both as participants and beneficiaries. It assists the efforts of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in this regard.

- The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), a small semi-autonomous body within the United Nations Development Programme, was set up in 1984 to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, working primarily at the country level. It focuses on strengthening women's economic capacity, engendering governance and leadership, and promoting women's human rights.

- Other United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies are engaged in activities for the advancement of women, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into their programmes of work.

95. In 1996, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) established an Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to monitor the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and gender-related recommendations emanating from other recent international conferences. The Committee should also serve as a forum for information exchange and the promotion of programme coordination and collaboration among United Nations system organizations.

96. A recent report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) indicated, however, that there was a lack of effective inter-agency coordination and that the activities of the Inter-Agency Committee "did not specifically relate to any of its members' existing programmes of work".[52] In the absence of a set of common priorities to which the activities of the Committee could be directed, the basis of coordination was unclear. The report noted that "the recourse to INSTRAW to provide research or training services was never examined, despite the fact that certain activities of the Inter-Agency Committee were directly relevant to INSTRAW's mandate". In fact, tasks which might have been included in INSTRAW's work programme were undertaken by DAW and the Statistical Division.

97. In her comments on the draft of this JIU report, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women stated that "oversight bodies misinterpret the terms of reference of the Committee". The Inspectors reviewed the terms of reference of the Inter-Agency Committee (ACC/1996/22, Annex III), and the report of OIOS, and did not see any instance of misinterpretation. The Special Adviser also pointed out in her comments that INSTRAW had withdrawn from collaboration in a joint project because of resource constraints. The Inspectors concur that the Institute's mounting financial difficulties may have been an impediment to its full participation in the activities of the Inter-Agency Committee.

98. The observations of the OIOS report should be borne in mind when reviewing claims of overlap and duplication in the work of DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. The Inspectors wish to emphasize that INSTRAW is the only entity within the United Nations system devoted to research and training on gender issues. It derives a strong comparative advantage from its capacity and experience in these specialized fields, and its mandate and role have been confirmed by successive resolutions and recommendations. While there may be complementarities in work programmes between the different agencies, INSTRAW has a unique mandate to fulfil. This was underlined by the Special Adviser in her comments on the draft of this report when she observed that "the JIU report should reflect that DAW and INSTRAW have entirely different workloads and mandates".

B. The proposal to merge INSTRAW and UNIFEM

99. The Secretary-General's proposal to merge INSTRAW and UNIFEM was submitted to the Economic and Social Council in June 1993, following the recommendations of a task force which was set up to consider the matter in May 1993. The General Assembly, in resolution 48/111 of 20 December 1993, requested the Secretary-General to carry out an institutional, organizational and financial study before further contemplation of the merger. On 7 September 1994, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) concluded that the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/217/E/1994/103) did not satisfy the requirements of resolution 48/111, since the short- and long-term effects of the merger on programme delivery of both INSTRAW and UNIFEM were not analysed. In addition, the request of the General Assembly to review and rationalize the interaction between INSTRAW, UNIFEM, DAW, CSW and CEDAW needed to be addressed before approval of the merger.

100. As was noted above, the decline in contributions to INSTRAW's Trust Fund coincided

with the issuance of the Secretary-General's report. This raises the question that the uncertainty about the future status of INSTRAW engendered by this report may have been a powerful reason for the decline in contributions by donor countries. It was certainly regarded as such by the Acting Director of the Institute in her progress report to the Board of Trustees in February 1997 when she referred to the Institute's "externally induced instability" and argued that "correcting the resulting impact means recovering institutional credibility, which was deeply affected by the 1993 proposal...and which is already casting a complex shadow particularly reflected in the wait-and-see attitude adopted in certain cases, which impinges negatively on the management and budget of INSTRAW".[53] The country which has made the largest donations to the Institute in recent years has confirmed, in a direct communication to the Inspectors, that the uncertainty surrounding this merger, and the attendant insecurity for the Institute, which created difficulties in filling vacancies, was one factor in its decision to reduce its contributions from 1996.

101. It is notable that the Beijing Platform for Action of September 1995 did not address the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM. On the contrary, it outlined the mandates of these two institutions separately, and hence reaffirmed the uniqueness of the mandate of INSTRAW.

102. In the course of interviews with high-level officials of the United Nations Secretariat and with the Director of UNIFEM, the Inspectors were left with the impression that the proposal to merge UNIFEM and INSTRAW was no longer being actively pursued. The Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, pointed out that the Beijing Platform for Action had reaffirmed the research and training mandate of INSTRAW, and, on that basis, a new Director had been appointed to the Institute in October 1997 and a strategic work plan developed, revitalizing the programme activities of the Institute.

IX. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

103. As noted above, the separate mandate of INSTRAW was reaffirmed by the Beijing Platform for Action, which also gave guidelines to the Institute concerning future priorities. The revitalization of the Institute began with the appointment of a new Director and a redefinition of the research and training strategy for the biennium 1998-1999.

104. The Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48 of 31 July 1998 requested the Director of the Institute 'to draw up a strategic and comprehensive work plan...setting out a vision for the future, taking into account the comparative advantages of the Institute's mandate within the United Nations system" (paragraph 5). Accordingly, the Director prepared the document "INSTRAW Strategic Plan and Work Programme, 2000-2003", and the Inspectors have received a preliminary draft, dated January 1999.

105. After consideration of this document, the Inspectors conclude that it represents a serious effort to move INSTRAW forward to the next millennium. Of the eight strategic goals proposed, seven relate specifically to the Institute's programme of work. The ideas presented are innovative and pertinent, and the Inspectors commend the vision of these strategic goals and the actions proposed for their achievement.

106. The Beijing Platform for Action demonstrates, in all its parts, the enormous need for new methodologies in research and training if its strategic objectives are to be fulfilled. For example, on the issue of women and poverty, it calls for the development of gender-based methodologies and research to address the feminization of poverty,[54] and these have been incorporated as elements of INSTRAW's research programme for 2000-2003. The Institute also plans a research project entitled "Women, Conflict and Conflict Prevention and Resolution", which is the focus of another strategic objective of the Beijing Platform.[55]

107. It is noteworthy that INSTRAW's mandate extends beyond women in development to encompass issues of gender equality in the developed world, including, importantly, countries in transition from central planning to market economies. The Vienna preparatory meeting held in 1994 for the Fourth World Conference on Women, strongly underlined the need for more research and training in the critical areas of concern identified as common to these countries, and this was reflected in the strategic objectives of the Vienna Platform for Action.[56] INSTRAW's Strategic Plan for 2000-2003 addresses several of these issues and the Inspectors note that within the United Nations system, the Institute is uniquely placed to advance gender based research and training for the western developed countries and the countries in transition.

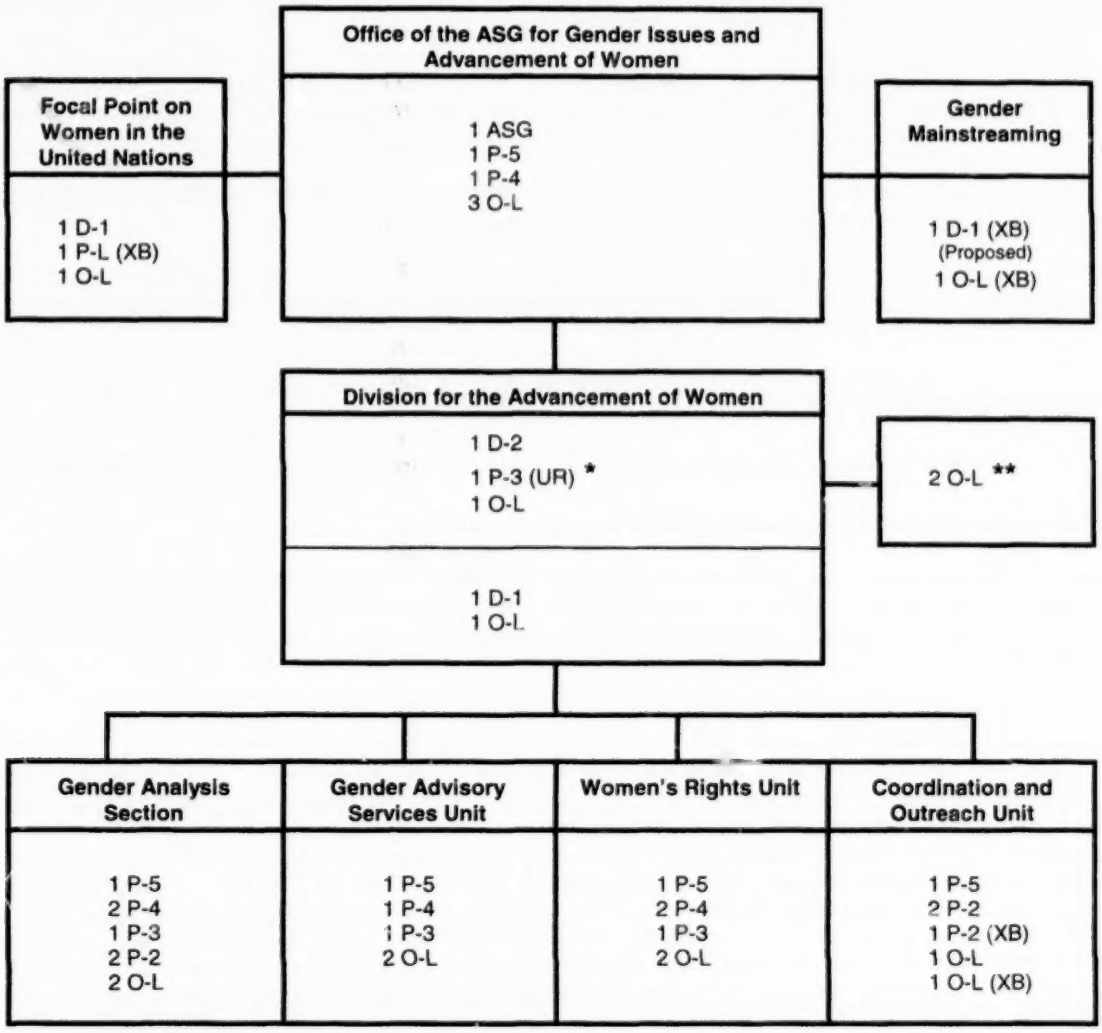
108. The eighth goal of the Institute's Strategic Plan concerns institutional aspects, and aims to "establish a secure and sustainable financial base for INSTRAW and promote a cost-efficient mode of operation". A more proactive role for the Board of Trustees is envisaged, including involvement in policy formulation, research, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes, and fund-raising. It is also proposed to seek contributions to an Endowment Fund for INSTRAW in order to establish a more secure financial base for the Institute.

109. The Inspectors consider that it would also be beneficial if the Institute were to reinforce its existing cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, and seek closer relations with other research and training institutions of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), as well as academic and training institutes outside the United Nations system.

ANNEX I

ORGANIGRAMME

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
(9 March 1999)



* Under recruitment

** Reference and Administrative Staff

NOTES

1. "International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Report of the Secretary General", Economic and Social Council, first regular session 1979, agenda item 8, E/1979/27, 5 April 1979, para. 3.

2. "United Nations Decade for Women. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, thirty-third session, agenda item 88, A/33/316, 20 October 1978, para. 28.

3. For a list of INSTRAW's worldwide focal points as at May 1998, see "INSTRAW's profile for the New Millennium" (Santo Domingo), June 1998, pp. 34-38, Annex V.

4. C. Safilios-Rothschild, K. Jorgensen and S. Mahmud, "Evaluation Report. United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)", commissioned by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Netherlands and Norway, February 1991, p. 6.

5. United Nations, "Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women", Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, para. 334.

6. "United Nations Decade for Women, 1976-1985. The Establishment of an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC, sixtieth session, item 9 of the provisional agenda, E/5772, 29 March 1976.

7. For a comprehensive list of INSTRAW's publications (research studies, joint publications and training materials) see "INSTRAW's profile for...", op. cit., pp. 39-43, Annex VI.

8. General Assembly resolutions 42/65 of 30 November 1987 and 44/60 of 8 December 1989.

9. General Assembly resolution 46/99 of 16 December 1991.

10. "Implementation of the Work Programme for 1998. Progress Report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report by the Director of the Institute to the Board of Trustees, nineteenth session (postponed), item 4 of the provisional agenda, INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.2, 11 December 1998, paras. 25-86.

11. C. Safilios-Rothschild et al., op. cit., p. 6.

12. Two technical reports were prepared on the subject of improving statistics and indicators on the situation of women. The first was a review of existing concepts, data sources and uses for indicators, which aimed at providing practical concrete guidance to producers and users of statistics and indicators on women on their selection, compilation and interpretation, in the main areas of economic activity and labour force participation, literacy and education, and household and family. The second was an analysis of conceptual and methodological problems in improving the quality and relevance of data pertaining to the conditions of women over the longer term. It provided a critical review of statistical concepts, methods and analytical interpretations of statistical findings on women in the fields of families and households, education and training, income and status differentiation and mobility. See "Progress Report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Report by the Director of the Institute", third session of the Board of Trustees, 24-28 January 1983, INSTRAW/BT/1983/R.3, 8 December 1982, paras. 10-13.

13. C. Safilios-Rothschild et al., op. cit., pp. 2-3.

14. Ibid., p. 1.

15. This plan was INSTRAW's response to the system-wide plan for women and development for 1990-1995, which was accepted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1987/86 of 8 July 1987, and which was designed to translate the developmental dimension of the Nairobi

Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. See "Advancement of Women. Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its ninth session", Economic and Social Council, first regular session of 1989, item 10(b) of the provisional agenda, E/1989/46, 21 April 1989, para. 144.

16. "Advancement of Women. Activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, fiftieth session, agenda item 107, A/50/538, 23 October 1995.

17. "Assessment of the current financial crisis of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)", Board of Trustees, nineteenth session (postponed), agenda item, INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.3, 5 March 1999, table 6.

18. An internal audit of INSTRAW in 1997 "disclosed that the inordinate delay in deciding on the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM since 1993, adversely affected the funding, staffing, programme planning and performance of INSTRAW". "Audit of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)", Audit and Management Consulting Division, Office of Internal Oversight Services, AF97/21/1, 5 February 1998, para. 4.

19. "Progress Report on the Institute. Oral report of the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs", Board of Trustees, first session, agenda item 3, 22-26 October 1979, INSTRAW/BT/1979/R.4, 19 October 1979.

20. "Assessment of the current financial crisis...", op. cit.

21. It should be noted that the decline in paid contributions between 1990 and 1991 was largely due to the statistical base effect of an exceptionally large paid (but unpledged) contribution by a single donor country in 1990 amounting to $936,887. This also explains the major discrepancy between the growth rate of pledges in 1991 (a rise of 37.4 per cent) and that of paid contributions (a fall of 20.3 per cent). This single contribution of close to $1 million in 1990 was far above the usual level of contributions of this donor and related in part to specific extrabudgetary activities. In the following year the contributions of this donor resumed more normal levels, with a distorting effect on the growth rates in 1991. As can be seen from table 1, the sustained decline in both pledges and contributions began in 1993.

22. "Implementation of the Work Programme for 1998. Progress Report...", op. cit., p. 30, table 5.

23. Memorandum dated 6 January 1999 from the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, to the Director of INSTRAW.

24. The postponed nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees took place on 3-7 May 1999.

25. "Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1980-1981", memorandum of the Secretary-General, Board of Trustees, first session, 22-26 October 1979, BT/1979/R.2, 2 October 1979, para. 18.

26. "Progress Report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Report by the Director of the Institute", Board of Trustees, second session, 25-29 January 1982, INSTRAW/BT/1982/R.3, 22 December 1981, para. 80.

27. "Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its first session", ECOSOC, first regular session of 1980, item 8 of the provisional agenda, E/1980/23, 29 February 1980, para. 11.

28. "Progress Report on the International...", op. cit., para. 73.

29. "United Nations Decade for Women. International...", op. cit., paras. 19-20.

30. "Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1980-1981", op. cit., paras. 18-21.

31. "United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1982-1983", report of the Director of the Institute, Board of Trustees, second session, 25-29 January 1982, INSTRAW/BT/1982/R.4, 25 November 1981, table 9 and paras. 32-35.

32. "Progress Report on the International...", op. cit., para. 53.

33. "United Nations Decade for Women, 1976-1985...", op. cit., para. 14.

34. "The advancement of women through and in the programmes of the United Nations system: what happens after the Fourth World Conference on Women?", JIU/REP/95/5, Geneva, 1995, recommendation 3(b).

35. Written response of Ms. Dunja Pastizzi-Ferencic to a questionnaire of the Inspectors, 13 April 1999.

36. "Progress report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report of the Acting Director of the Institute to the Board of Trustees, sixteenth session, 19-23 February 1996, item 5 of the provisional agenda, INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.2, 15 January 1996, paras. 97-98.

37. "Progress report of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report by the Acting Director to the Board of Trustees, seventeenth session, 17-21 February 1997, item 5 of the provisional agenda, INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2, 23 December 1996, para. 44.

38. "Proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 1998-1999", Board of Trustees, eighteenth session, 27 April-1 May 1998, item 7 of the provisional agenda, INSTRAW/BT/1998/R.4, 23 March 1998, para. 21.

39. This view was also stated in the Director's progress report for 1998: "Despite the vigorous administrative and substantive activities undertaken during 1998, the financial forecast for 1999 does not provide the possibility for the completion of the biennium and thus the Institute's survival." "Implementation of the work programme for 1998. Progress report...", op. cit., para. 3.

40. "International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", Secretary-General's bulletin, ST/SGB/214*, 17 January 1986.

41. United Nations, Internal Audit Division, "IAD Audit No. H91/001 - INSTRAW", 9 January 1992, paras. 16-18.

42. UN Board of External Auditors (India), "Irregular payment of (a) Dependency Allowance & (b) Educational Grant (INSTRAW 1994-1995)", AO-12/94-95/INSTRAW, 26 April 1996.

43. "Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its fifteenth session", Economic and Social Council, substantive session of 1995, 26 June-28 July 1995, agenda item 5 (e), E/1995/80, 3 July 1995, para. 140.

44. UN Board of External Auditors (India), "Pay and allowances of a UN staff charged to INSTRAW", AO-11/94-95/INSTRAW, 26 April 1996.

45. "United Nations Decade for Women, 1976-1985...", op. cit., paras. 16-17.

46. Article VII of the Statute makes provision for the Secretary-General to "provide the Institute with appropriate administrative and other support, including financial and personnel services...it being understood that no extra costs to the regular budget of the United Nations are incurred".

47. "International Research and Training Institute...", op. cit.

48. "Progress Report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Report by the Director of the Institute", Board of Trustees, second session, 25-29 January 1982, INSTRAW/BT/1982/R.3, 22 December 1981, para. 72.

49. "Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its third session", Economic and Social Council, first regular session of 1983, 3-27 May 1983, item 12 of the provisional agenda, E/1983/31, 18 March 1983, paras. 142 and 144.

50. United Nations, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", Volume 1, Section 2, p. 138, table 2.30 and p. 187, para. 2.138, A/52/6/Rev.1, 1997.

51. "The advancement of women through and in the programmes of the United Nations system: what happens after the Fourth World Conference on women?", JIU/REP/95/5, Geneva, 1995.

52. United Nations, Office of Internal Oversight Services, "Audit of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)", Audit Assignment No. AF97/21/1, 5 February 1998, paras. 10-11.

53. "Progress Report of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women", report of the Acting Director to the Board of Trustees, seventeenth session, 17-21 February 1997, item 5 of the provisional agenda, INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2, 23 December 1996.

54. Strategic objective A.4. United Nations, "Report of the Fourth...", op. cit., paras. 67-68.

55. Strategic objective E.1.: "Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation." Ibid., para. 142.

56. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, "Women in the ECE region: A call for action", highlights of the ECE High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Vienna, 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. GV.E.95.0.17).